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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2669
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1895
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1865
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1988
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0561
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1265
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1622
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2044
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4475
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1115
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOOC/ECMO/CC/DAO/DOB/DOI//
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000266

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#) [ASEC](#)
SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT: A WIN OR A RUNOFF? MDC REVEALS
ITS RESULTS

REF: HARARE 254

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JAMES D. MCGEE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B & D)

[¶1.](#) (U) SUMMARY: On April 2, the opposition MDC held a press conference to announce its final internal vote tabulation from the March 29 national elections. According to the MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai, with 50.3 percent of the vote and a 2.4 percent margin of error, beat out President Mugabe, who received 43.8 percent, results which closely matched figures from a recent NGO projection. While still claiming Tsvangirai's victory as an outright win, the MDC allowed that

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they would participate in a runoff, though under protest. The MDC also claimed a majority in the House of Assembly, announcing that the opposition would control the new parliament with 114 seats. END SUMMARY.

[¶2.](#) (U) At an April 2 press conference widely covered by the international media, opposition MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti, who opened by joking that in the absence of credible Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) figures, the MDC served as the parallel market for results, announced the party's final internal tabulation of presidential and House of Assembly contests. Careful not to violate the Electoral Act by announcing results ahead of the ZEC, Biti reiterated that the MDC's totals were based entirely on data posted at polling sites and closely matched a parallel vote tabulation projection by the Zimbabwean Electoral Support Network (ZESN), whose methodology Biti commended. According to Biti, Morgan Tsvangirai won the presidential race with 50.3 percent of the vote (placing him over the 50 percent plus one threshold for a win without a runoff); while President Mugabe received 43.8 percent and Simba Makoni just 7 percent. The MDC reported that 2,382,243 Zimbabweans went to the polls and that the results reflected the will of the people. Biti

noted that the MDC's favorable election results did not detract from the fact that the elections were neither "free, fair, nor credible."

13. (U) In the wake of reports in the government newspaper of a runoff, Biti stated that while the MDC unequivocally maintained that Tsvangirai had won the presidential race outright, the party would contest under protest in a runoff if deemed necessary by ZEC's official results. (Note: Under the current law the runoff must be held within 21 days of the announcement of the official results.) Biti mocked the current regime, noting that a runoff would likely increase the MDC's margin of victory and embarrass Mugabe. He again emphasized the MDC's concern that ZEC had yet to announce its final tabulation a full three and a half days after the election. Biti called on ZEC to provide the public with access to the polling site result forms in order to allow for verification of the count and chastened the commission for the delay, calling it "a vacuum where mystery fills in and leaves Harare filled with conspiracies and counter-conspiracies."

14. (U) Biti went on to announce tabulations from the parliamentary House of Assembly races. According to Biti, the MDC (Tsvangirai) won a plurality of 99 seats, ZANU-PF received 96, the MDC (Mutambara) won 11 and independent (and former ZANU-PF MP) Jonathan Moyo retained his seat. Biti noted that the MDC also expected to win three additional seats in by-elections in party strongholds where elections did not take place due to the deaths of candidates. This would bring the opposition total to 114 of 128 seats, resulting in control of Parliament. Biti said MDC tabulations were largely consistent with parliamentary results released so far by the ZEC, although there were some

HARARE 00000266 002 OF 002

discrepancies.

15. (U) Responding to questions by reporters, Biti reiterated the MDC stance that despite the statements of election observers the election was not free, fair, or credible. This, according to Biti, only proved that "even under the most difficult of conditions, the people's will prevails." Biti also noted that while the SADC negotiations had failed to result in the establishment of conditions for free elections, the process had resulted in critical amendments to existing legislation, especially the new provision to the Electoral Act that required the posting of results outside polling stations. Without that change, he noted, "we would not be here and ZANU would have stolen the election."

16. (C) COMMENT: By announcing its internal results, referring to the ZESN parallel vote tabulation (Reftel) and declaring that Tsvangirai was the next president of Zimbabwe, the MDC hoped to preempt the ruling party and the ZEC from announcing fraudulent results favoring ZANU-PF. While the MDC clearly believes Tsvangirai won the election outright, Biti's remarks indicate the MDC realizes the best possible scenario is a runoff. If a runoff is held, expedient coordination of donor resources and assistance to increase the likelihood of a credible process will be crucial. END COMMENT.

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